The Romance of Lincoln's Life

BY MYRTLE REED Author of "Love-Letters of a Musician"



First of the Series

Y THE slow passing of the years the human mind attains what is called "the historical perspective," but it is still a mooted question as to how many years are necessary. Since Lincoln, nine Presidents have been placed in the White House by the sovereign will of the people, still we think of that one who, save the first, was greatest as a statesman and a soldier rather than a man. He was at the helm of the "ship of state" in the most fearful storm it has yet passed through; the struck off the sthackles of a fettered people, and was crowned with martyrdonn, yet in spite of his greatness he loved like other men.

There is no record of the boyde, which comes to most use in in the stood-days. The great passion of its life the most first own of the state THE slow passing of the years the

of his life eame full-fledged in his young mainbood, with no whit of its sweetness gone.

Sweet Anne Rutledge! There are those who remember her well, and to this day, in speaking of her, their eyes fill with tears. A lady who knew her says, "Miss Rutledge had auburn hair, blue eyes and a fair complexion. She was pretty, rather slender, and in everything a good-hearted young woman, beloved by all who knew her."

Before Lincoln loved her she had a sad experience with another man. About the time that he came to

Before Lincoln lowed her she had a sad experience with another man. About the time that he came to New Salem a young man drifted in from the Eastern states—John McNeil. He worked hard, was plucky and industrious and soon accumulated a little property. He met Anne Rulledge when she was but seventeen and still in school, and began to pay her special attentions, which at last culminated in their

engagement. He was about to go back to New York for a visit, and before leaving he told Anne that his name was not McNeil but McNamar—that he had changed his name so that his dependent family might not follow him and settle down upon him before he was able to support them. Now, since he was in a position to aid his parents, brothers and sisters, he was going back to do it, and upon his return he would make Anne his wife. engagement. He was al

his parties, of the control of the c

She wrote—but there was no answer. At last, stung by pride and with her heart almost breaking, she definitely accepted Lincoln. It was necessary for him to complete his law studies, and after that he said, "Nothing on God's footstool shall keep us comet."

apart.

He worked happily, but a sore eonflict raged in Anne's tender heart. Love and pride, doubt, despair, fear and all the legions of darkness strove upon the battle-field of her soul. Finally the strain told upon her delicate health, and she took to her bed with a fever.

with a rever.

The summer waned, and Anne's life ebbed with it.

At the very end of her siekness, when all visitors were forbidden, she insisted upon seeing Lincoln.

He went to her—and closed the door between them and the world. It was his last hour with her. When he came out his face was white with the agony of parting.

parting.

A few days later she died, and he was almost insane with grief. He walked for hours in the woods, refused to eat, would speak to no one, and there settled upon him that profound melanehoty which came back time and time again during the after-

years.

To one friend he said, "I cannot bear to think that the rain and snow and storms will beat upon her grave." When the days were dark and stormy he was constantly watehed, as his friends feared that he might take his own life. Finally they persuaded him to go away, to the house of a friend a few miles out of town, and here he remained until he was ready to face the world once more.



A few weeks after Anne's burial McNamar returned to New Salem. On his arrival he met Lincoln in the post-office, and both were sorely distressed. He made no explanation of his absence, and shortly forgot about Miss Rutledge, but her grave was in Lineoln's heart until the bullet of the assassin struck him down.

In October of 1833 Lincoln met Miss Mary Owens, and admired her, though not extravagantly. From all accounts she was an unusual woman. She was tall, full in figure, had blue eyes, dark hair and was well educated. She returned to New Salent in 1836, and Lincoln at once began to call upon her, enjoying her wit and beauty. At that time she was about twenty-eight years old.

enjoying ner wit and beauty. At that time sie was about twenty-eight years of another woman were ascending a steep hill, on the way to a friend's house, when Lincoln joined them. He walked behind with Miss Owens, and talked with her, quite oblivious of the fact that her friend was carrying a very cross and heavy baby. When they reached the summit Miss Owens said, laughingly, "You would not make a good busband. Ahe"

Owens said, laughingly, "You would not make a good husband, Abe."

They sat on the fence, and "had it out" with each other. Both were angry when they parted, and the breach was not healed for some time. It was poor policy to quarrel, since some time before he had proposed to Miss Owens, and she had asked for a period in which to consider it before giving a final answer. His letters to her are not what one would call "love-letters." One begins in this way:

MARY:- I have been sick ever since my arrival, or Maw:—I have been sick ever since my arrival, or I should have written sooner. It is but little difference, however, as I have very little even yet to write. And more, the longer I can avoid the mortification of looking in the post-office for your letter, and not finding it, the better. You see I am mad about that old letter yet. I don't like very well to risk you again. I'll try you once more, anyhow.

The remainder of the letter deals with political matters, and is signed simply "Your friend, Lincoln." In another letter to her, written the following year, he says

he says:

I am often thinking about what we said of your coming to live at Springfield. I am afraid you would not be satisfied. There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here, which it would to your doom to see without sharing it. You would have to be poor, without the means of hiding your poverty. Do you believe you could bear that patiently?

Whatever woman may cast her lot with mine, should any ever do so, it is my intention to do all in my power to make her happy and contented, and there is nothing I can imagine that would make me more unhappy than to fall in the effort.

I know I should be much happier with you than the way I am, provided I saw no signs of discontent in tho way of jest, or I may have misunderstood it. If so, then let it be forgotten; if otherwise, I much wish you would think serjously before you decide. For my part, I have already decided. What I have said I

will most positively abide by, provided you wish it.
My opinion is that you had better not do it. You
have not been accustomed to hardship, and it may
be more severe than you now imagine. I know
you are capable of thinking correctly upon any subject, and if you deliberate maturely upon this before
you decide, then I am willing to abide your decision.

The True and Absorb-

ing Story of Lincoln's Three Love-Affairs

Matters went on in this way for about three months; then they met again, seemingly without making any progress. On the day they parted Lincoln wrote her another letter, evidently to make his own position clear and put the burden of decision on her.

"If you feel yoursell in any degree bound to me," he said, "I am unow willing to release you, provided you wish it; while, on the other hand, I am willing, and even anxious, to bind you faster if I can be convinced that it will, in any considerable degree, add to your lappiness. This, indeed, is the whole question your happiness. This, indeed, is the whole question with mc. Nothing would make me more iniserable than to believe you miserable—nothing more happy than to know you were so."

In spite of his evident sincerity, it is not surprising to learn that a little later Miss Owens definitely and finally refused him. In April of the following year Lincoln wrote to his friend Mrs. L. H. Browning, giving a full account of this grotesque courtship.

ing, giving a full account of this grotesque courtship.

"I finally was forced to give it up," he wrote, "at which I very unexpectedly found myself mortified almost beyond codutance. I was merified, it seemed to me, in a hundred different ways. My vanity was deeply wounded by the reflection that I had so long been too stupid to discover her intentions, and at the same time never doubting that I understood them perfectly; and also that she, whom I had taught myself to believe nobody else would have, had actually rejected me, with all my fancied greatness.

"And to cap the whole, I then, for the first time, began to suspect that I was really a little in love with her. But let it all go. I'll iry and; this can never with truth be said of myself. I have now come to the conclusion ever again to think of marrying, and for this reason I can never be satisfied with any one who would be blockhead enough to have me."

The gist of the matter seems to be that at heart Lincoln hesitated at matrimony, as other men have done both hefore and since his time. In the letter to Mrs. Browning he speaks of his efforts or "grocrastinate the evil day for a time, which I really dreaded as much, perhaps more, than an Irishman does the hack, perhaps more, than an Irishman for the state of the stat

with her quiek sagacity, her will, her nature and culture."

"I have happened in the room," she says, "where they were sitting, often and often, and Mary led the conversation. Lincoln would listen, and gaze on her as if drawn by some superior power—trredsitbly so; he listened, but scarcely ever said a word."

The affair naturally culminated in a definite engagement, and the course of love was running smoothly, when a distracting element appeared in the shape of Miss Matilda Edwards—the sister of [concurred or NACH 44]

[CONCLUDED ON PAGE 44]

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The Romance of Lincoln's Life

LCONTINUED FROM PAGE 7 1

Mrs Edward's husband. She was young and fair, and Lincoln was pleased with her appearance.

For a time he tried to go on as before,

but his feelings were too strong to be con-cealed. Mr. Edwards endeavored to get ceated. Mr. Edwards enticitored of Speed, but she refused both Speed and Douglas. It is said that Lincoln once went to Miss Todd's house, intending to break the engagement, but his real love proved

oo strong to allow him to do it.

His friend Speed thus describes the

conclusion of this episode:

"'Well, old fellow, I said, 'dul you do

"Well, old fellow, I said, 'dul yor do as you intended' responded. Lincoln, Marchael College, and the said responded Lincoln, the said respond

the first of January, 1841, and then when the hour came Lincoln did not appear, and was found by his friends wandering alone in the woods plunged in the deep-est melancholy—a melancholy verging on est inclancholy—a melancholy verging on insanity. The story has no foundation; in fact, most competent witnesses agree that no such marriage date was fixed, although a date may have been talked of. It is certain, bowever, that relations between Lincoln and Miss Todd were broken off at this time. He did go to broken oft at this time. He did go to Keutheky for a while, but this signicistra-tion was certainly not due to insanity. Lincoln was never so mindless as some biographicis would have us believe, and the breaking of the engagement was due in temperament of the lovers and Lin-colu's inclination to draw back at a crisis. o perfectly natural conses

Meantume the strained relations with Miss Todd were gradually improving. They meet occasionally in the parlor of a friend, Mrs. Francis, and it was through Miss Todd that the duel with Shields came about.

She wielded a sareastic and ready pen,

She wiclded a sareastic and ready pen, and safely hidden by a pseudonym and the promises of the editor, wrote a series of satirical articles for the paper, and called them "Letters from Lost Townslips." In one of these she touched up Mr. Shields, the auditor of state, to such good purpose that he challenged Lincoln to a duck,

that he challenged Lincoh to a duct, believing he had written the article. Lincoh necepted the challenge, and chose "cavalry broadswords" as the weapons, but through the intervention of friends there was no finite.

those occurrence of the control of t

layern was accumed to end at the White blonse, after years of vicissitude and change. Children were born to them, and all but the eldest died. Great responsibilities were laid upon Lincoln, and even when he met them bravely it was

even when he met then bravely it was inevitable that both should suffer. Upon the face of the Commander-in-Chief a nighty sadness always lay, unless his illuminating smile for a moment banished the clouds. Storm and stress, stifering and heartache, victory and teleat, were his portion, yet he died with his great purpose nohly infilled. The United Republic is his monument, and that maged yet gracious figure, ballowed by mintryfrolm, stands before the eyes of his countrymen, forever serene and calm.



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Poems Old and New

ODE TO SOLITUDE

Harry the man whose wish and care A few paternal acres bound, Content to Breathe his native air highs own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields

with breath,
Whose flocks supply him with attire;
Whose trees in summer yield him shade, In winter, fire.

Blest, who can niconcern'dly find Hours, days and years slide soft away In health of body, peace of mind,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease Together mixed; sweet recreation, And innocence, which most does please With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus inflamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie. Alexantler Pope.

e, (1688-1744)

TO BLOSSOMS

Fair pletiges of a fruitful tree, Why do ye fall so fast? Your date is not so past But you may stay yet here awhile To blash and gently smile, And go at last.

What! were ye born to be What were ye born to a An hour or half's delight, And so to bid good-night? 'Tis pity Nature brought ye forth Merely to show your worth And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we May read how soon things have Their end, though ne'er so hrave; And after they have shown their pride Like you awhile, they glide Into the grave.

Robert Herrick. (1501-1674)

THE LAMENT OF THE MOTHERS

The night they brought the dead men home. We had no place for dirge or sigh; We would not weep at what had come. For war must be, and braves must die.

Ho ken ha voh! All things must pass! These were our sons who went away.

And yet we do not know, alas!

On what strange hunting-grounds they stray.

If it be dark, if it be cold,
If all the warmth and light be sped,
And if the tribal feuds still hold
Within the tepecs of the dead,

We tlo not know. Ho ken ha yoh! We to not know. Ho ken ha yon!
Our sons, our sons are gone away!
Weep now, because we do not know
On what strange hunting-grounds they stray! . HELEN HICKS

SLEEPLESSNESS

SLEPPLESSNESS

A PLOCK of sleep that leisurely pass by One after one; the sound of rain, and bees

Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds und seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I've thought of all by turns, and still I lie Sleepless; and soon the small birds' unelodies melodies Must hear, first uttered from my or-chard-trees.

chard-trees.

And the first enckoo's melancholy cry.

Even thus last night, and two nights more. I lay.

And could not win thee, Sleep, by any stealth.

So don't let me wear to night away:

Without thee what is all the morning's wealth?

Come, blessed barrier between day and

day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and
joyous health. William Wordsworth.

(1770-1850)



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